

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO, MY

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR CARDIAC SURGERY TEAM

1. MINISTER OF HEALTH TAN SRI LEE SIOK YEW ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO CALL ON HIM. THE PURPOSE WAS TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT IN OBTAINING A CARDIAC SURGERY TEAM FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA HOSPITAL.

2. THE MINISTER NOTED THAT MALAYSIA DOES NOT HAVE ANY SURGEONS CAPABLE OF OPEN-HEART WORK AND THAT PERSONS REQUIRING SUCH SURGERY MUST GO ABROAD. FOR THE WEALTHY THIS PRESENTS NO INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEM, BUT FOR THE MAJORITY IN THE MIDDLE AND LOWER CLASSES THE EXPENSE OF SUCH TREATMENT PUTS IT COMPLETELY OUTSIDE THEIR REACH. MALAYSIA, HE WENT ON, WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN TRAINING ITS DOCTORS TO PERFORM CARDIAC SURGERY. THE NEW HOSPITAL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA HAS OPERATING ROOMS EQUIPPED FOR CARDIAC SURGERY BUT NO DOCTORS TRAINED TO PERFORM IT.

3. MINISTER LEE WOULD LIKE TO BRING A CARDIAC SURGERY TEAM TO MALAYSIA FOR A THREE-YEAR PERIOD TO TEACH AT THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND ADVISE THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INSTITUTE OF CARDIOLOGY AT THE GENERAL HOSPITAL. HE ENVISAGED SUCH A TEAM WOULD BE MADE UP OF 2 CARDIAC SURGEONS, 2 CARDIAC PHYSICIANS, 2 OR 3 TECHNICIANS, AND IF POSSIBLE, A CARDIAC RADIOLOGIST. THE

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MINISTER NOTED THAT IN THE 1960'S A NEUROSURGEON, DR. ROY

SELBY, HAD COME UNDER CARE/MEDICAO AUSPICES, AND SERVED AS A PROFESSOR OF NEUROSURGERY AT THE UNIVERSITY AS WELL AS PLANNING ADVISER IN A NEUROSURGICAL SECTION OF THE HOSPITAL.

4. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HOW SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD BE FUNDED. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD HOPED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST. HE NOTED THAT IN THE CASE OF DR. SELBY, CARE/MEDICO AND THE GOM SHARED THE COST ON A MATCHING DOLLAR BASIS. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT THE ABSENCE OF AN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH MALAYSIA, AND SEVERELY CURTAILED GRANT ASSISTANCE FUNDS MADE DIRECT. U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORT UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO EXPLORE THE MATTER WITH WASHINGTON.

5. COMMENT: THE MINISTER WOULD, OF COURSE, PREFER TO OBTAIN SUCH ASSISTANCE ON A GRANT BASIS, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROJECT HAS SUFFICIENT HIGH LEVEL INTEREST AND PRIORITY IN THE THIRD 5-YEAR PLAN THAT MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT FUNDS WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO COVER A PART OR ALL OF THE COST. WHILE USG FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE, WE COULD BE OF ASSISTANCE IN PUTTING THE GOM IN CONTACT WITH AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL THAT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN THE PROJECT. WOULD APPRECIATE INSTRUCTIONS ON OUR REPLY TO THE MINISTER'S REQUEST.
UNDERHILL

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